

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 19 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend claims 1, 6-8, 10, 13-15, and 18, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A printing system comprising:

a print requester host; and

a single or a plurality of print requestee printers connected via a network to said host; wherein

said host ~~abstractly~~ defining a port of a printer driver serving as an output path to said single or plurality of printers ~~an actual printer~~ without setting information regarding actual destination of a print request; and

when there occurs a print request to said port of the printer driver, said host ~~automatically~~ selects a ~~specific printer~~ from said single or plurality of printers ~~for printing~~ through sequential execution, between said host and said printer on said network, of a retrieval request from said host, a retrieval response from said printer, a print request from said host, and a response to said print request from said printer; and

the requested printing is done by the selected printer.

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): A printing system according to claim 1, wherein
upon occurrence of a print request on said host, said host sends a retrieval request packet to
a plurality of printers on said network, wherein
said printer that has received said retrieval request packet from said host, if enabled for print,
sends a retrieval response packet to said host, wherein
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host selects as a
requestee candidate a printer from which said host has first received a retrieval response, to send a
print request packet to said requestee candidate printer, wherein
said requestee candidate printer that has received said print request packet sends a validation
response packet to a print request to said host, and wherein
upon receipt of said validation response packet from said requestee candidate printer, said
host determines said requestee candidate printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A printing system according to claim 1, wherein
said printer that has received a retrieval request packet from said host sends a retrieval
response packet to said host, said retrieval response packet containing communication information
on said printer itself, wherein
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host sends a print request
packet to a plurality of printers on said network, said print request packet containing communication

information on a printer selected, and wherein

upon receipt of said print request packet, said printer compares printer communication information contained in said print request packet with its own printer communication information, said printer if coincident recognizing that said printer itself has been selected, to send a validation response packet to said host.

Claim 5 (Original): A printing system according to claim 1, wherein

said host displays information indicative of a printer selected on the basis of a printer response packet, on a user interface.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): A printing system according to claim 1, wherein

said host makes a retrieval request to said printers on said network, said retrieval request containing unique printer specific information for specifying a printer, said host automatically selecting a specific printer selected from said single or plurality of printers, that conforms with previously entered printer specific information, for printing.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): A printing system according to claim 6, wherein

said host sends a retrieval request packet to all printers on said network with unique printer specific information designated, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval request packet from said host, said printer sends a retrieval

response packet to said host providing that said printer is enabled for print and that said designated unique printer specific information is coincident with its own printer specific information, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host when said received printer specific information coincides with said designated printer specific information sends a print request packet to said printer having coincident printer specific information, wherein

a ~~specific printer~~ selected from said single or plurality of printers that has received said print request packet sends a validation response packet to a print request to said host, and wherein

upon receipt of said validation response packet from said printer, said host determines said printer as a print requestee for print processing.

Claim 8 (Currently amended): A printing method for performing a printing operation by selective use of a single or a plurality of printers connected via a network from a print requester host, said method comprising the step of:

~~abstractly~~ defining a port of a printer driver serving as an output path to said single or plurality of printers without setting information regarding actual destination of a print request an actual printer; and

when there occurs a print request to said port of the printer driver, selecting a printer from said single or plurality of printers ~~causing said host and said printer on said network to automatically select a specific printer for printing~~ through sequential execution, between said host and said single or a plurality of printers ~~printer~~ on said network, of a retrieval request from said port, a retrieval

response from said printer, a print request from said port, and a response to said print request from said printer; and
executing the requested printing.

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Currently amended): A printing method according to claim 9 8, wherein
upon occurrence of a print request on said host, a retrieval request packet is sent to a plurality
of printers on said network, wherein
said printer that has received said retrieval request packet from said host, if enabled for print,
sends a retrieval response packet to said host, wherein
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host selects as a
requestee candidate a printer from which said host has first received a retrieval response, to send a
print request packet to said requestee candidate printer, wherein
said requestee candidate printer that has received said print request packet sends a validation
response packet to a print request to said host, and wherein
upon receipt of said validation response packet from said requestee candidate printer, said
host determines said requestee candidate printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): A printing method according to claim 8, wherein

said printer that has received a retrieval request packet from said host sends a retrieval response packet to said host, said retrieval response packet containing communication information on said printer itself, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host sends a print request packet to a plurality of printers on said network, said print request packet containing communication information on a printer selected, and wherein

upon receipt of said print request packet, said printer compares printer communication information contained in said print request packet with said its own printer communication information, said printer if coincident recognizing that said printer itself has been selected, to send a validation response packet to said host.

Claim 12 (Original): A printing method according to claim 8, wherein

said host displays information indicative of a printer selected on the basis of a printer response packet, on a user interface.

Claim 13 (Currently amended): A printing method according to claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

making a retrieval request from said host to said printers on said network, said retrieval request containing unique printer specific information for specifying a printer; and

automatically selecting a ~~specific~~ printer selected from said single or plurality of printers, that conforms with previously entered printer specific information, to perform said printing operation.

Claim 14 (Currently amended): A printing method according to claim 13, wherein
said host sends a retrieval request packet to a plurality of printers on said network with unique printer specific information designated, wherein
upon receipt of said retrieval request packet from said host, said printer sends a retrieval response packet to said host providing that said printer is enabled for print and that said designated unique printer specific information is coincident with its own printer specific information, wherein
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host when said received printer specific information coincides with said designated printer specific information sends a print request packet to said printer having coincident printer specific information, wherein
a ~~specific~~ printer selected from a single or a plurality of printers, that has received said print request packet sends a validation response packet to a print request to said host, wherein
upon receipt of said validation response packet from said printer, said host determines said printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

Claim 15 (Currently amended): A print requester apparatus for performing a printing operation by selective use of any one of a plurality of printers connected via a network, said apparatus comprising:

an output port of a printer driver that is ~~abstractly~~ defined as an output path to said plurality of printers without setting information regarding destination of a print request ~~an actual printer~~; and

a printer retrieval unit which, when there occurs a print request to said port of the printer driver, ~~automatically~~ selects a ~~specific printer~~ from said plurality of printers ~~for printing~~ through sequential execution, between said printer retrieval unit and said plurality of printers ~~printer on said network~~, of a retrieval request from said host, a retrieval response from said printer, a print request from said host, and a response to said print request from said printer.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): A print requester apparatus according to claim 15, wherein upon occurrence of a print request, said printer retrieval unit sends a retrieval request packet to a plurality of printers on said network, wherein

upon receipt of a retrieval response packet from a print enabled printer, said printer retrieval unit selects as a requestee candidate a printer from which said printer retrieval unit has first received a retrieval response, to send a print request packet to said requestee candidate printer;

upon receipt from said requestee candidate printer of a validation response packet to said print request packet, said printer retrieval unit determines said requestee candidate printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

Claim 17 (Original): A print requester apparatus according to claim 16, wherein
said printer retrieval unit displays information indicative of a printer selected on the basis of
a printer response packet, on a user interface.

Claim 18 (Currently amended): A print requester apparatus according to claim 15, wherein
said printer retrieval unit makes a retrieval request to said printers on said network, said
retrieval request containing unique printer specific information for specifying a printer, said printer
retrieval unit automatically selecting a specific printer selected from said single or plurality of
printers, that conforms with previously entered printer specific information, to perform a printing
operation.

Claims 19 - 20 (Canceled):